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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the International Master's Degree in Business Administration (IMBA) program at Regis University, focusing on the perceptions of Taiwanese students. Regis University, Denver, Colorado, is a leading school for adult education and a center for Taiwanese adult students. The sample consisted of 28 Taiwanese graduates of or students in the IMBA program, representing a 60.87% return rate. Most respondents were male (76.92%), married (77.27%), and aged 36 to 50 years (73.08%). Eighty-four percent were fully employed. The program was evaluated by students as being of very good quality and as meeting students' needs. Students thought the curriculum was excellent and the instructors and staff were reported to be helpful. The students appeared to be experienced students of acceptable English proficiency. Overall, the program appeared to fulfill the students' personal goals. The evaluation questionnaire is attached. (SLD)

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ED 467 598

TAIWANESE STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF THE REGIS UNIVERSITY'S INTERNATIONAL MASTERS DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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SUMMARY

This research will evaluate the IMBA program of Regis University, which is a leading school for adult education and for Taiwanese adult students. There are some concerns about the quality of the Taiwanese students, the quality of the program, and also the quality of the marketing and resources of the program. Although domestic adult education has been developed for more than 50 years in the United States, the primary focus of American higher education was never on educating international adult learners.

Recently, many private colleges have begun to expand their market to include international adult learners. Since 1970, Asia has been the biggest source of international students to the U.S. Today, more than 50% of the international students are from Asia. For many years now, Taiwan has ranked third, after China and Japan, in the number of international students sent to the U.S. Taiwan, with its economic success and the recent openness of its political system, becomes one of the best student resources for many American universities.

What is the attitude of adult learners in Taiwan? What is the environment like there? How can American colleges develop their programs successfully there? The results of this evaluation can serve as an excellent model for many colleges and universities which have an interest in developing their programs internationally

In summary, the program was evaluated by students as being a very good quality program. The program was perceived as meeting the students' needs. The curriculum was reported as excellent for Taiwanese students. The instructors and staff were reported to be helpful. The students' appeared to be very experienced. English proficiency was acceptable. The program appear to fulfill the students personal goals.

Introduction

The present study provides information obtained on Regis University's International Master's Degree in Business Administration (IMBA) program and the Taiwanese students attending this program. Data sources consisted of documents, interviews, and a survey questionnaire. The first section will describe the history of the program followed by the research questions.

Regis University's IMBA program

The Regis University IMBA program began in 1989 and was designed as an intensive educational program to attract international business executives, professional specialists and government officials to earn a Masters of Business Administration degree (MBA) from Regis University. The objectives of this IMBA program were to offer a unique opportunity for international students to broaden their management knowledge and perspectives, and at the same time earn an MBA degree while continuing to work in a foreign nation. To overcome the time, job, and language constraints of international adult learners, this comprehensive graduate program was carefully designed to fit students' needs and it was intended to provide students a solid foundation in all aspects of management and business with an international flavor in most courses. The curriculum was specifically designed for entrepreneurs, managers, and government employees, according to the 1995 brochure of the IMBA program by Dr. Ed Cooper, Associate Dean of Graduate Programs for the School for Professional Studies.

Structure of the Program

This program is organized as a continuous learning process of 15 to 16 months in length, with three semesters in each period. Each semester is 16 weeks, consists of three terms, and is to be completed in Denver, Colorado. The three terms of a semester are (a) pre-term prerequisites, (b) classroom term, and (c) post-term.

Pre-Term. All necessary course materials such as textbooks, supplementary materials, requirements, and prerequisites are provided to each student in advance of the beginning date of the semester. Students will have full preparation for their course work before they come to Denver.

Classroom term. Classes are held on the Regis University campus for 8 hours per day, 5 days per week. The term consists of three weeks for the first and third semesters and for 4 weeks for the second semester. Each course requires 40 classroom hours. During the classroom term period, three courses are taught in the first and third semesters and four courses are taught in the second semester. Transportation, translators, room and board are arranged by the school. All courses are taught in the English language, and classes are conducted under the auspices of the appropriate graduate department chairperson.

Post-term. These requirements come into play after the classroom term is completed. At this time the remaining time can be spent either in the United States or a foreign nation determined by the students. Students can adjust their own pace and work to complete their home assignment or research topics of their instructors and turn in their papers and results before the end of the semester or at a deadline set by their instructors, and earn the grade for that course. In both the pre-term and post-term period, students can have full communication with their instructors and school by telephone, telefax, E-mail, letter, and possibly personal trips to the school for their course work.

The faculty for this program is carefully selected, the curriculum is constantly updated, the quality is closely watched, and a global focus of courses is built into the context.

Admission and Degree Requirements

The admission requirements are almost the same as any other graduate business school: (a) official transcripts, (b) TOEFL score, (c) financial statement, (d) resume/work history, (e) completed application form, (f) application fee, and (g) more than three years working

experience. The TOEFL score can be waived if the applicant can prove his/her English proficiency to the school. The school can arrange to interview the student to verify his/her English proficiency for waiving the TOEFL requirement. Each IMBA student needs to complete all pre-term prerequisites, all class sessions each term, all post-term requirements, all required IMBA graduate courses, and maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average.

IMBA Curriculum

During the three semesters, 30 semester hours and 10 courses need to be completed after all pre-requisites have been completed. These 10 courses are (a) managerial economics, (b) ethical and legal environment of business, (c) issues in international business, (d) production and operations management, (e) interpreting accounting information, (f) organizational structure and design, (g) international marketing, (h) financial decision making, (I) information resource management, and (j) strategies in a global environment. Because of this international program, some instructors are taking the opportunity to conduct research comparing management practices, different business environments and different cultural philosophies in marketing, operations, financial arrangements and so on. It is a group study and a three-way study. It is an interesting and unique opportunity to study together for both students and instructors, or students and school. The structure of the IMBA program of Regis University is shown in Figure 3.

REGIS UNIVERSITY

DEAN OF SCHOOL

MARKETING STAFF	**IMBA COORDINATOR**	PROFESSORS
RECRUITERS	SUPPORT STAFF	TRANSLATOR
ROOM & BOARD		STUDENTS
CLASSROOM & SERVICE	FOOD SERVICE	TRANSPORTATION

Figure 3. Structure of IMBA Office and Function

The solid lines represent a direct school relationship. The dotted lines represent an indirect school relationship. For example, the IMBA Coordinator has to coordinate the program and work with professors, the Marketing Director, the support staff and the school's food services people. The Marketing staff works with professors and recruiters under certain agreements. The support staff needs to work with related demands such as translators, transportation, and classroom services. They need to provide information regarding room and board, and they need to support the instructors and market the school to the students as well.

History of the IMBA Program

Regis college was founded in 1877 as one of the 28 Jesuit institutions in the United States. It was committed to liberal arts learning, value-centered education, and professional studies, balanced by an awareness of real-world needs and concerns. It offered an education base to support students' abilities to learn and to think logically and critically. It sought to provide value-centered education and a commitment to the pursuit of truth and social responsibility. It also sought to develop the skills and leadership abilities necessary for excellent professional performance. Both graduate and undergraduate degrees were offered.

Currently, there are approximately 9,000 students in 12 campuses of Regis University. Both traditional and non-traditional degrees are offered, and the tradition of Jesuit education is continuing in the school. In recent years, under the presidency of ex-president Father David Clark and the current president Father Michael Sheeran, the growth of the university is noticeable.

The MBA program was established in 1978 and then adult learner service program was established in 1981. In 1991, Regis College became Regis University with three constituent divisions: Regis College (traditional programs), the School for Professional Studies (SPS) and

the School for Health Care Professionals (SHCP). Dr. William Husson is the Dean for SPS, and Dr. Edward Cooper is the Associate Dean for SPS in charge of graduate programs.

The mission of SPS focuses on adult education which is flexible and serves the process of learning wherever it occurs. Globalization has become a trend in the past decade and globalization became a main priority of Regis University's mission according to the Executive Summary of Regis University Globalization Workshop on June 12, 1991. Globalization is not new to Jesuits. Jesuit Fathers were the first respectable group to spread the Gospel into China and Asia and to initiate the modernization of China and Japan. The globalization goal can be found clearly in the "Growing Moderately" portion of the report of Strategic Analysis, 1994-95. Regis University intends to serve more than 500 international students per year. The IMBA program began in 1989 and, July of 1995, produced approximately 100 graduates from the program. All of these graduates are Taiwanese adult learners, according to the Annual Report 1994-95 of the School for Professional Studies by the Dean of the school, Dr. William J. Husson.

There was some instability in the number of students joining the program, with some question about student quality from the school's side, and some students questioning the quality of the program and students. But are these questions really there? Can the program continue to generate more revenue for Regis University, and also fulfill the maximum function of education? Can Regis University pioneer the program into a leading role in the field on international adult education which is still a virgin land for many private colleges in the U.S.? Many of these private colleges fully depend on the tuition of students to survive.

Sample

The sample consisted of 28 Taiwanese students who attended Regis University's IMBA program. The analysis of these 28 returned surveys are shown in Table 1 based on (1) gender, (2) age, (3) marital status, and (4) employment. Of the 28 returned surveys, 76.92% were from males, and 23.08% were from females; 77.27% of the students are married and 22.73% of those

married are female; 2.85% of them are between the ages of 19-25 years, 15.38% of them are between 26 and 35 years, the majority (73.08%) are between 36 and 50 years and only 7.69% of them are older than 50 years, which is a normal situation of age ranges in adult education. Eighty-four percent (84%) of them are fully employed and 16% of them are employed part-time. Of those person who returned surveys six are still taking the courses in the program, and 22 have already earned their MBA degree.

These findings were compiled from surveys, interviews with students and instructors, reading through various documents, and the personal observations of the researcher. Four of the 50 surveys were unable to be delivered and were returned to the researcher. Out of the 46 surveys which were sent out, a total of 28 surveys were returned, which puts the return rate at 60.87%. Anything higher than 60% can be considered an acceptable result. From outside, a total of 14 students were interviewed; 9 of them already graduated and 5 of them are still in the program. Three of them are female and 11 of them are male students whose ages range between 28 and 48 years. Two are single and 12 are married. Two instructors who are still teaching and who are both male and married, were interviewed regarding certain general issues as well as their own opinions regarding the quality of the students and the program, their teaching experiences, and some related problems about this program. ; and also, some open-ended questions were not answered completely by many of them.

Table 1

Statistic number of returned surveys.

Student	Gender		Marital Status		Age				Employment	
	M	F	S	M	19-25	26-35	36-50	Over 50	Full	Part
No.	20	6	5	17	1	4	19	2	21	4
%	76.92	23.08	22.73	77.27	3.85	15.38	73.08	7.69	84.00	16.00
Total	26[1]		22[2]		26[1]				25[3]	

Note: Key: Gender
M = Male
F = Female

Marital Status
S = Single
M = Married

Total returned surveys is 28 out of 46 (60.87%).
This table is a simple analysis for those who answered the survey. Some of them did not answer all the question. [1]Two did not answer this section completely; [2]Four did not answer Marital Status; [3]One did not answer the employment question.

The Findings

Research Question 1: What is the Student's Evaluation About the Quality of this IMBA Program?

Question 3 asked, "In general, was your personal objective(s) accomplished?" From Question 3 of Table 2, most people chose 4 (Quite Well – 64.29%) as their answer, and then 3 (Somewhat – 25%) followed by 5 (Very Good – 10.71%). Nobody chose 2 (Hardly) or 1 (Not at all) as their answer. The high percentage of students who chose "Quite Well" indicated that the students believed they achieved their goal.

They were also very satisfied with the IMBA instructional staff. Questions 4 (Indicate the extent to which the staff was enthusiastic about the topics they presented), 5 (Indicate the extent to which the staff was properly prepared), 6 (Indicate the degree to which the staff was helpful and friendly and 7 (In general, how would you rate the instructional staff) of Table 2 evaluated their satisfaction about the instructional staff. Most students chose "Quite Well" as their answer. Question 6 scored so high that 50% of the students felt the instructors were friendly and helpful. It showed that Regis University's instructional staff is good, dedicated and well-liked by these adult students. They were friendly, helpful, well-prepared, and enthusiastic in their instruction. This is an excellent rating.

Questions 8 (Did Regis University provide adequate planning for an effective learning experience?) and 9 (Was adequate support provided by Regis University?) of Table 3 which relate to the IMBA office support are shown on page 72. In answer to Question 9 of Table 3, Taiwanese students believed the IMBA office did adequate planning for effective learning (53.57%) and also provided adequate support to students (53.57%). Both questions received very positive responses, which indicates how well they felt the IMBA office treated the program and their organization.

Table 2

Distribution and response of students to "Quality" issue related to student expectation, instructional staff and organization.

Question	5 Very Much		4 Quite Well		3 Somewhat		2 Hardly		1 Not at all		Mode
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
3	3	10.71	18	64.29	7	25.00	0	0	0	0	4
4	3	10.71	19	67.86	6	21.43	0	0	0	0	4
5	6	21.43	12	42.86	8	28.57	1	3.57	1	3.57	4
6	14	50.0	10	35.72	3	10.71	1	3.57	0	0	5
7	4	14.29	18	64.29	5	17.85	1	3.57	0	0	4
10	4	14.82	9	33.33	13	48.15	1	3.70	0	0	3
11	7	25.00	8	28.57	9	32.14	1	3.57	3	10.72	3

Note: Question 3: In general, was your personal objective(s) accomplished?

Question 4: Indicate the extent to which the staff was enthusiastic about the topics they presented.

Question 5: Indicate the extent to which the staff was properly prepared.

Question 6: Indicate the degree to which the staff was helpful and friendly.

Question 7: In general, how would you rate the instructional staff?

Question 10: How important doe this program seem to be to the MBA Office of Regis University?

Question 11: How important is your attendance in this program to the organization/institution that employs you?

The results were reasonable when compared to Question 5 and 6, and Question 10 (How important does his program seem to be to the MBA Office of Regis University?) on Table 2. The results of Table 2 showed that the students rate the instructional staff very high. The results of Question 7 show 14.29% of the students chose "Very Much" and 64.27% chose "Quite Well." Both choices combined total more than 78.58%. The results of Question 6 show that 50% of the students chose "Very Much" and 35.72 chose "Quite Well" for the instructional staff's attitudes in helping and being friendly. Both choices combined total more than 85.72%. The contact and friendship were not well established for the staff when compared to those instructors who taught 40 hours with them (and maybe also due to some accounting coordination problems). The other reason may be due to the traditional respect given to teachers from Confucius' teaching which has some impact on why students have more satisfaction with the instructional staff..

Table 3

Student response to the degree of the IMBA office support to students and also related to students' effort (Questions 8, 9 and 14).

Question	Yes		Undecided		No	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
8	15	53.57	8	28.57	5	17.86
9	15	53.57	10	35.71	3	10.72
14	26	92.86	2	7.14	0	0

Note: Question 8: Did Regis University provide adequate planning for an effective learning experience?

Question 9: Was adequate support provided by Regis University?

Question 14: Was your involvement worth the time and effort?

The instructors seemed to be very enthusiastic about the topics they presented. From Question 4, the results showed that 10.71% of the students chose "Very Much" and 67.86% chose "Quite Well," with both choices combining to total more than 78.57% for Question 4. When looking at the results of Question 10 (How important does this program seem to be to the MBA Office of Regis University?), 14.82% of the Taiwanese students chose "Very Much," and 33.33% chose "Quite Well." Both choices combined to total 48.15%.

The results of Question 5 (Indicate the extent to which the staff was properly prepared) indicated that 21.43% of the students chose "Very Much" and 42.86% of the students chose "Quite Well," with both choices combining to total 64.29%, which was interesting. However, there were 28.57% of the students who believed that the instruction staff was only "Somewhat" prepared, and 3.57% chose "Not at All."

Adult students have a lot of life experience and an abundant knowledge of their jobs. Without excellent preparation, the adult students are not easily satisfied by instructors. The instructors need to be well prepared or the evaluation of their teaching will be low.

But 92.86% of the students confirmed that they did not waste their time to get a degree from Regis University (from Question 14 of Table 3) and 7.14% of them could not decide. This might be due to the fact that they were not sure what impact obtaining an MBA degree might have on their lives. Some of the surveys came from students who had not yet graduated and were not sure if they would graduate. Or maybe, they were being conservative regarding their time and effort in the program. These adults were happy with what they learned from Regis University. Question 2 was designed for Research Questions 1 and 4 and Question 3 could be part of this quality issue, too.

The suitability of the program also related to the quality issue. Overall, 80.95% of the survey of Table 4 clearly showed that this curriculum was well-designed and also welcomed by Taiwanese students. The international curriculum was a success for Regis University to market in Taiwan.

This curriculum allowed the non-business major students to participate in the degree program immediately without wasting too much time to complete undergraduate business courses. Regis University selected only those students who already had three years of work experience. These students were able to enter the program quickly. Also, the students with non-business majors (55.10%, Table 8) were able to enter the program without any difficulty, and many of them earned Master Honors. This curriculum also allowed 44.90% (Table 8) of those business students to obtain advanced knowledge from the courses without repeating their undergraduate courses. This was a success in curriculum design and was so overwhelmingly confirmed and approved in the surveys. Very few students doubted its suitability. This was an excellent demonstration of Regis University's leading role in international adult education. This information will provide a good cornerstone for many private institutions to build on.

Table 4

Suitability of curriculum of program (Question 27).

Students	Yes		Undecided		No	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No.	17	80.95	3	14.29	1	4.76

Note: Question 27: Are you satisfied with the curriculum of the program?

In comparing interview results from Tables 5 and 6 with the survey results from Tables 1, 2 and 3, they matched very well. The professors enjoyed the program and Taiwanese students, too. Students were also pretty satisfied with the curriculum of the program (8095%, Table 4). The students who were surveyed and interviewed confirmed that they were satisfied with the curriculum, the support staff of the IMBA program, and the instructors. They also believed they did not waste their time to study and

they felt it was important for them. It was a very measurable result for the quality of the program and the students approved the quality of this program.

The office support of the program was considered to be strong. Most of the staff, from directors of the program to the support staff, supported the program. There were small cultural-understanding issues, but the support over the past four years was always there.

Summary and Conclusions

The program was evaluated by students as being a very good quality program. The program was perceived as meeting the students' needs. The curriculum was reported as excellent for Taiwanese students. The instructors and staff were reported to be helpful. The students' appeared to be very experienced. English proficiency was acceptable. The program appear to fulfill the students personal goals.

Program Evaluation Questionnaire

Directions: As part of our effort to evaluate the effectiveness of this program, we would appreciate your completing this questionnaire. You need not indicate your name.

Participant Expectations

1. Participants in this program have specific individual purposes for selecting the program. What specific aspects of the program experience, if any, contributed to your achieving your personal objective(s)?

_____

_____

2. What aspects of the experience, if any, detracted from your achieving your objectives(s)?

_____

_____

3. In general, was your personal objective(s) accomplished?

5	4	3	2	1
Very Much	Quite Well	Somewhat	Hardly	Not at all

Instructional Staff

4. Indicate the extent to which the staff was *enthusiastic* about the topics they presented.

5	4	3	2	1
Very Much	Quite Well	Somewhat	Hardly	Not at all

5. Indicate the extent to which the staff was properly *prepared.*

5	4	3	2	1
Very Much	Quite Well	Somewhat	Hardly	Not at all

6. Indicate the degree to which the staff was *helpful and friendly.*

5	4	3	2	1
Very Much	Quite Well	Somewhat	Hardly	Not at all

7. In general, how would you rate the instructional staff?

5	4	3	2	1
Superior	Good	Average	Fair	Poor

Comments:_____

_____

MBA Office Support

8. Did Regis University provide adequate planning for an effective learning experience?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

Comments:_____

9. Was adequate support provided by Regis University?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

Comments:_____

10. How important does this program seem to be to the MBA Office of Regis University?

5	4	3	2	1
Very Much	Quite Well	Somewhat	Hardly	Not at all

11. How important is your attendance in this program to the organization/institution that employs you?

5	4	3	2	1
Very Much	Quite Well	Somewhat	Hardly	Not at all

Program Benefits

12. In your own words, briefly indicate the one or two major personal benefits you have gained as a result of participating in this program.

_____

_____

_____

13. Can you envision any benefits accruing to your organization or institution? If so, please describe.

_____

_____

_____

14. Was your involvement worth the time and effort?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

Motivation and Reasons for Selecting Regis University's IMBA Program

15. Why did you decide to get an MBA degree? Please select those items which are most appropriate in order of priority, with 1 being the highest and 6 being the lowest.

a. Needed for job _____ b. Wanted degree _____ c. Self-fulfillment _____

d. Family expected it _____ e. Social status _____ f. Other _____

16. Why did you select Regis University? Check all items that apply.

a. Recruiter _____ b. Recommended by friend _____ c. Jesuit university _____

d. Media _____ e. Personal research _____ f. Other _____

17. Compare the tuition and Regis University with other programs.

a. Too high _____ b. A little high _____ c. Average _____

d. A little low _____ e. Too low _____

18. Please rate the difficulty in obtaining the MBA degree from Regis University.

a. Very difficult _____ b. Difficult _____ c. Average _____ d. Easy _____

19. Should Regis University make the program more flexible in schedule for international learners to study?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

20. Do you feel that the English proficiency requirement is fair for an academically well-qualified international adult learner to attend American schools?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

21. Do you feel that academic proficiency and experience should be more important than the English proficiency to study in an MBA program?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

22. Do you feel that using bi-lingual instructors will be more attractive for academically well-qualified adult learners from Taiwan?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

23. Is obtaining a graduate degree from an accredited American university worthy of your goals(s)?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

24. Regis University is one of 28 Jesuit universities which have an excellent reputation in China's history. (First Jesuit father was sent to China and initiated a modernization of China). Are you proud of this factor?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

Comments: _____

25. Are you planning to change your job after graduation?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

Comments: _____

26. Will this degree benefit you in your present job or in the future?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

Comments: _____

27. Are you satisfied with the curriculum of the program?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

Comments: _____

Participant's Information

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married

Age (Years): ☐ 16 – 19 ☐ 19 – 25 ☐ 26 – 35 ☐ 36 – 50 ☐ over 50

Employment: ☐ Full time ☐ Part time

Occupation: _____

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